A Moravian Farmhouse near Hope, Warren County New Jersey HABS-NJ-705

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

A Moravian Farmhouse (Davis Homestead)\* Near Hope, Warren County, New Jersey

Owners: Mrs. Annie E. Blake and Miss Louise Blake, Schooley's Mountain. New Jersey

Occupants: Norman Crisman and his mother

Date of Erection: 1770-1800

Builders: Members of the Moravian Congregation (United Brethren)

Present Condition: Original, well maintained. Front porches and first story front door are modorn replacements.

Number of Stories: Two and one half; no collar.

Materials of Construction:

Foundation - masonry

Exterior walls - coursed masonry front, broken range
ends and rear, stone-arched door
and window openings.

Interior walls - frame partitions, plastered
Chimneys - Brick above roof
Roof - gable, slate covered

Historical Data:

The name of the builder and first occupant of this hillside farmhouse has not been recovered for this account, but evidently he was one of the members of the Society of United Brethren, known as the Moravians, whose settlement in what is now Hope Township existed from 1769 to 1808. The entire 1900 acre "Moravian Tract" there, as in Pennsylvania and North Carolina, was held by the nominal proprietor of the real estate belonging to the church, and parcelled out at a small ground rent to the members who came as tenants. (a) Not until the division of this tract in 1808 is the individual owner builder. Isaac Newton, surveyor, of record.

<sup>\*</sup> The inscription on stones near the north corner of front wall, "Davis Homestead Farm 1781" was carved for William J. Davis who purchased the place in 1923, reports his niece, Miss Louise Blake. His grandfather, Mark W. Davis owned it 1828-1836

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Further inquiry could be made in search of his identity by one able to read the German script of the possible to the deposition and the Minutes of Committee, both deposited in the archives of the Morvian Church at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. The assistance of their present archivist is unavailable for this account. We have, however, by search of property deeds been able to reassemble the entire Moravian tract as it was sold off in parcels upon the termination of the congregation in 1808, as shown on one of the survey drawings of this house. (b)

The Moravian Tract. By deed of 7 March 1769, Samuel Green of Knowlton Township, Sussex County, New Jersey, and his wife Anna conveyed to (the Rev.) Nathaniel Seidel of Bethlehem, Northampton County, Penna., for 700 Pounds, a tract in the former place, "upon a branch of Paquessing Creek called and known by the name of the Beaver Run", desoribing it as beginning at a some in the line of Covernor Penn's land, thence (1) by said Green's other land southeast 94 chains to a post in a line of other land of said Green, (2) South 40 degrees west 77 chains by the same and by land of Israel and Barnabas Swayze to a stone, (3) by said Swayze's land North 47 degrees west 35.75 to a stone "by the side of a hill near the Great Road," and (4) by said Swayze South 47 degrees west 48 chains to a stone. thence (5) north 47 degrees west 60 chains to a white oak tree balown down, near a black oak lettered W.B., and (6) north 43 degrees east along Governor Penn's line 119.5 chains to place of beginning, containing 945 acres, with "All and singular the messuages, mills, buildings" etc.(c)

<sup>(</sup>a) The Moravian Economy. For upwards of twenty years after entering Pennsylvania (1742), none body politic, being united in an Economy. Cooperative as was this feature in their system of colonization, it differed materially from the communistic movements of a later day, in as far as aggrandizement in things temporal, either for the individual or for the corporation, was utterly foreign to its design and spirit. Its sole aim was the support of the gospel ministry and the maintenance of foreign and domestic missions. The surrender of personal property into a common treasury was no requirement for admission into this Economy. Its members contributed merely their individual labor for the common good, whether as artisans or husbandman, and in return were supplied with the necessities of life. (Transactions of the Moravia n Historical Society, vol. 1, appexdix page 8.)

Samuel Green the grantor abovenamed, was born 1695 and died 15 April 1775, according to his gravestone in the Swayze burying ground, about a mile southwest of the village of Hope (see photograph in NJ-706), and his wife Ann Abigail died 25 July 1791 at the village. They has become converts to the Moravian missionaries whom they entertained there, were baptized at the Bethlohem headquarters of the society in 1749, and in 1768 offered his real estate for the establishment of a Moravian congregation in Knowlton Township, Sussex County, New Jersey, (d) which was accepted as per deed above abstracted.

Subsequently, by deed of 10 November 1770, Green and his wife Ann conveyed to Seidel for 300 Pounds 320 acres which extended the original grant 37 chains further northeast, reciting his purchase thereof from Jonathan Stout by deed of 1st August 1751 (e), with 200 acres adjacent on the northeast line thereof, and 200 between the southeast line of the first two tracts (the Wm. Biddle tract) and Jenny Jump Mountain, with "all and singular the buildings", reciting conveyance of the latter two additions by deed of 1st December 1749 from

<sup>(</sup>b) The list of inhabitants and first settlers who were present at the laying of the cornerstone of the Moravian Church at Hope on 2 April 1781: Joseph Meiser, pastor, and wife Rosina, Frederick and Mary Leinbach (he was manager 1771), Daniel and Elizabeth Hauser (he was miller 1807), Ephraim and Magdalena Colver, Hiram and Hagdalena Demuth, Frederick and Catherine Blum (he was tanner 1773-1807), Frederick and Ann Rauchenberger (he was asst. mgr.), Stephan and Ann Niclas (he was brickmaker 1775), Adolph and Catharine Hartman (he was blacksmith 1775-1807), Martin and Ann Mary Schenke, Jacob and Ann Mary Schneider, Joseph and Dorothea Huber, Henry and Margareth Schener (he was foreman of farm), Louisa Partser widow, Ann Abigail Green widow, Henry Blom, Samuel Schulze, Christian Loesch, Thomas Bolton, Philip Hartman, and ninetcen children. (Henry Race, Historical Sketch of the Loravian Settlement in Sussex County, 1768-1808, publ. 1891 in Froc. N.J. Hist. Soc., 2d. series, XI, 200.)

<sup>(</sup>c) Sussex Co. Deed Book Q, page 187.

<sup>(</sup>d) Rev. C.F. Muge, Sketch of the Settlement of Hope, N.J., publ. in Transactions Moravian Hist. Soc. vol. 1 page 51.

<sup>(</sup>e) Recorded in West N.J. Deed Bk. P., page 522, now deposited in the office of the Sec. of State, Trenton. Both adjacent tracts mentioned in text formed the one of 1250 acres surveyed to William Biddle of Burlington Co., 9 June 1715. He conveyed it to Samuel Johnson of Trenton on 24 Dec. 1734 (Bk. EF-463) who conv. 320 acres thereof to Benj. Smith on 20 Feb. 1737 who conv. same to Johathan Stout of Amwell Twp. Hunterdon Co. 1 Aug. 1751.

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his father Samuel Green the elder. (f) By a third deed, dated 30 August 1771, Green conveyed to Seidel 250 acres at the S.E. cor., so that the entire "Moravian Tract" comprised some 1900 acres.

The farm here considered extended the full 37 chains width of the 320 acre (Johnson-Smith-Stout-Green) tract described above, on the west eide of Beaver Brook and the road from Hope village north to Blairstown. That the house thereon was not that of Samuel Green is evident from a diagram of the village of Hope which appears inside the rear cover of the Hope Church Book of records 1774-1808, now filed at Bethlehem, the map inscribed in the handwriting of Bishop Ettwein, who was pastor in Hope, 1774-75 and 1779-80. This map shows the village at the intersection of present Union and High Streets, with Walnut Street extending northward from the latter, past Cyder Alley, to a house marked "Green's" (g). The village had been eurveyed on 25 and 26 November 1774 by the Moravian Brother, J.W. Golgosky, and laid out in lots by the Brethren Nathaniel Seidel, John Ettwein and Hans Christian Von Schweinitz. (h)

Of the five successive owners of this 320 acre section of the Moravian tract, in Knowlton Township, listed in note (2), from 1715- to 1751, only the last one, Samuel Green, is of record as an actual settler in that township. In the deed of 1st December 1749, he is described as "Millwright" and his father as "yeoman", both of Greenwich Township, Morris County, which township as incorporated 1738 included nearly all the territory embraced in the present County of Warren.

<sup>(</sup>f) Recorded in Sussex County Deed Book Q - page 1932.

<sup>(</sup>g) Tracing of map supplied by K.G. Hamilton, Asst. Archivist, Moravian Church, Bethlehem, Pa., 1942. Compare Barber & Howe, Historical Collections of the State of N.J., 1845:Hope In 1769, the Moravians from Bethlehem, Pa., purchased a tract of about 1000 acres at this place of Mr. Green, who lived in a log house on the hill, a few rods from the Christian Church. The variant church is still standing in 1942, S.W. cor. Walnut St. and Cider Alley, L.D.C.

<sup>(</sup>h) C.F. Kluge, cited in (d).

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In his will dated 3 September 1760, the father, Samuel Green, is described as resident in Hardwick Twp., Sussex Co., which removes him from the house in question, the latter being in the Oxford-Knowlton part set off from Greenwich in 1753 and divided in 1764.

The chain of title to this particular farm in the 320 acre portion of the Moravian tract is reported as follows:

- (1) Warrant of Survey 10 March 1714 to William Biddle of Mt. Hope, Mansfield Twp., Burlington Co., N.J., one of the Proprietors of West New Jersey, for 1250 acres, executed 9 June 1715 upon a branch of Paquessing River, Hunterdon Co., by John Reading, surveyor general. (Recited in 2.)
- (2) Deed 24 Dec. 1734, William Biddle above-said, to Samuel Johnson of Trenton, Hunterdon Co., gentleman, for 160 pounds, the 1250 acre tract abovesaid, "Beginning at a Spanish cak tree for a corner, standing in the line of John Beller's land, a little below an Indian Path which leads from Rarington to Pahekkqualing, thence SE 86 chains to a corner post, SW 42 degees 94 chains along under a great mountain to a hickory sapling for a corner, SW 30 degrees 41 chains to a black oak tree, NW 100 chains to a white oak corner tree, and NE 145 chains to first mentioned corner. (West N.J. Deed Book, EF page 463.)
- (3) Deed 20 February 1737, Samuel Johnson to Benjamin Smith, 320 acres in the NE end of the tract above described. (Unrecorded, recited in 5)
- (4) Deed 17 April 1751, Benjamin Smith of Amwell Twp., Hunterdon Cd., to Jonathan Stout, 320 acres. (Unrecorded, recited in 5.)
- (5) Deed 1st August 1751, Jonathan Stout of Amwell Twp., Hunterdon Co., to Samuel Green Jr., of Greenwich, Morris Co.\* conveying for

<sup>\*</sup> Morris Co. was formed from Hunterdon Co. 1739, Sussex Co. from Morris Co. 1753, Warren Co. from Sussex 1824. In 1751 Greenwich Twp. extended over most of present Warren County.

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150 Pounds, a 320 acre tract beginning at a Spanish Oak tree for a corner, standing in the line of John Beller's land near a branch of Paquessing River a little below an Indian Path that leads from Rarington to Tahukqualing thence SE 86 chains to a corner by the side of a great mountain, along said mountain and in a line of land belonging to Samuel Johnson S 42 degrees W 37 chains to a corner post, NW 87 chains to the line of said Johnson's land, and along his line NE 37 chains to the first mentioned corner. (W.N.J. Deed Bk. P page 522.)

(6) Deed 10 November 1770, Samuel Green off Knowlton Twp#, Sussex Co., N.J., yeoman and wife Ann to (the Rev.) Nathaniel Seidel of Bethlehem, Northampton Co., Penna., conveying for 300 Pounds, a 720 acre tract in Knowlton "upon a branch of Pequessing creek called and known by the name of Beaver Run", beginning at a heap of stones, formerly a Spanish Oak tree, in a line of John Beller's land, thence by his land S 47 degrees E 41 chains to a white oak, NE 23 chains to a corner marked hickory tree in a line of land late of Anthony Morris decd., by his land SE 91 chains to a corner post and stones, along the side of a mountain S 50 degrees W 23.40 to a corner post and stones, continuing by the side of said mountain S 55 W 91 chains to a stone corner, N 48 W 12 chains to a stone in a line of land lately granted unto said Nathaniel Seidel), by the name N 40 E 53 chains to a post, continuing by said Seidel's land N 47 W 94 chains to a post in of Governor Penn's land, and by his land N 43 E 37 chains to place of beginning. Recital that \$320 acres or thereabouts, part thereof, being the same land which one Jonathan Stout by his Indenture of the 1st of August 1751, recorded at Burlington in Liber P. of Deeds, folio 522, granted unto the said Samuel Green in feet (see above), and 400 acres residue being same which Samuel Green the elder, by his deed of 1st December 1749, recroded at Burlington in Book AB of deeds, folio 136, granted to his son the said Samuel Green in fee. (Sussex Co. Deed Bk. Q, 193意)

<sup>#</sup>Line of division between knowlton and Oxord Townships, as surveyed 1788, passed through the village of Hope.

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- (7) Will dated 20 June 1770, the Rev. Nathaniel Seidel,\* of Bethlehem, Penna., proved 1782 in Northampton Co., Penna., devised all real and personal estate, (including the Moravian Track in New Jersey) to Frederick Marshall in trust for the United Brethren.
- (8) Will dated 16 Dec. 1801, proved in March 1802, Frederick William Marshall, of Salem, Stokes, Co., North Carolina, devised to the Rev. Christian Lewis Benzein of Salem, in trust for the people known as Unitas Fratrum, (United Brethren) all lands in Penna., West New Jersey, North Carolina, or elsewhere in America, which were bequeathed to testator in the will of Nathaniel Seidel of Bethlehem, Pa., abovesaid. (Sussex Co. N.J. Deed Bk. C., page 163.)
- (9) Deed 17 June 1808, Christian L. Benzein of Salem, N.C., Clerk, by attorney J. C. Cunow of Bethlehem, Pa., Esq., to Isaac Newton of Hope, Sussex Co., N.J., surveyor. Conveys for \$1333.33 a tract of 40 acres and 3 perches in Knowlton Twp., Suasex Co., N.J., beginning at a stone in the line of John Lawrence's land, thence by other land of said C.L. Benzein the 8 following courses: N 79 E 8.126 chains, N 34 E 7.15, N 472 W 3.425, N 10 W 3.50, N 29 E 4.775, N 43 E 8.50, N 13 E 6.40, and N 29 W 4.25, thence by land of Johah Howell N 49 W 1.8125, thence by other land of said C.L. Benzein S 41 W 37.45, thence by other lands of said

<sup>\*</sup> Nathaniel Seidel, Bishop of the Brethren's Church, born 2 Oct. 1718 at Lauban, Lower Silesia, Germany, came with first Morevians to Bethlehem, Penna., 1742, missionary in New England, New York, Penna., and Maryland, West Indies, North Carolina, consecrated bishop 1758, died 17 May 1782. As nominal Proprietor of the real estate belonging to the church, he purchased from Samuel Green a tract in N.J. for annew settlement to be organized according to the exclusive system of other Moravian towns. This place received the name of Hope; that it proved a failure and had to be relinquished in 808 was not the fault of Seidel. (Transactions Moravian Hist. Soc., 1886, Vo. II, 225).

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Benzein and of said John Lawrence S 55 E 11.50 chains to place of beginning. Recital: Being part of a 320 acre tract "the residue of the so-called Hope Tract" which Samuel Green and wife Ann by indenture of 10 Nov. 1770, recorded in Bk. C, 1932, granted to Nathaniel Seidel, and since becamed vested in Frederick Marshall who by will 16 Dec. 1801 devised all the residuary part of his estate including the above 320 acres, unto said Benzein. "Together with all and singular the houses, out-houses, edifices and buildings thereon erected and being." (Sussex Co. Deed Bk. Y, page 254.) This is lot No. 1 in item 11. It lies on the west side of Beaver Brook. The estate of Isaac Newton, abovememed first individual owner of this house, does not appear in Warren Co. probate records. Whether he was a tenant of the Moravians previous to his purchase in 1808 has not been discovered.

Deed dated 1st Nov. 1811, C. L. Benzein of Salem, N.C., by attorney J.G. Cunow of Bethlehem, Pa., to David Barolay\* of Hope, Sussex Co., N.J., conveys for \$2000 a 57 acre 105 perches tract in Knowlton Twp., Sussex Cc., beginning at a stone in line of Andrew Weitzell's land, being a corner of Jonah Howell's land, thence by said Weitzell's land S  $42 \pm W 8.60$ , S 23-3/4 W 27.4, by a line of John and denry Shiner N 49 W 8.80, N 552 W 12.12 crossing the mill pond, N 79 E 8.18, N 34 E 7.15, N 47 g W 3.42, N 10 W 3.50, N 292 E 3.77, N 432 E 8.56, N 13 E 6.40, N 29 W 4.25, by land of Jonah Howell S 49 E 22.4 to place of beginning. Recital: Being part of a 320 acre tract, part of the so-called Hope tract which Samuel Green and wife Ann by indenture 10 Nov. 1770 conveyed unto Nathaniel Seidel, etc., as above. (Sussex Co. Deed Bk. Y, page 185) This is the adjacent lot No. 2 in item 11.

<sup>\*</sup> The Rev. David Barolay of Hope, pastor of Presbyterian churches at Cxford, Mt. Bethel and Knowlton 1805-1815, (J.P. Snell, Hist. Sussex & Warmen Cos. N.J. 1881, p. 632). By deed of 3 Dec. 1811, David Barelay purchased lots nos. 17 and 18 in the village of Hope, on which was the stone house now the American House Hotel, surveyed as N.J.-704.

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(10) Deed dated 26 June 1824, Estate of Isaac Newton and David Kinney by Sheriff to Lewis D. von Schweinitz\* of Bethlehem Twp., Northampton Co. Pa., upon foreclosure of mortgage dated 18 June 1808, Newton to Benzein, of \$1333.33, conveys lot No. 1 abovesaid. (Sussex Co. Deed Bk. Z2, p. 438.)

Deed dated 26 June 1824, Estate of David Barclay and David Kinney by Sheriff to Lewis D. von Schweintiz\* upon foreclosure of mortgage dated 2 Nov. 1811, Barclay to J.G. Cunow, \$1300, conveys lot No. 2 abovesaid. (Sussex Co. Deed Bk. Z2, page 445.)

(11) Deed dated 16 June 1828, Lewis D. von Schweinitz\* and wife, Amalia Louisa, of Town of Bethlehem, Northempton Co., Pa., to Mark W. Davis (a) of Warren Co., N.J., conveying for \$200 two adjacent tracts in Knowlton Twp., Warren Co., being the same conveyed to said von S. in item (10), 40-3/4 and 57 acres 105 perches. (Warren Co. Deed Bk. No. 5., page 356.)

Articles of Agreement, 10 July 1822, Col. Abram Smyth of Oxford Twp., Sussex Co., and Mark W. Davis; Smyth to convey to sd. Davis by deed, upon receipt of balance of purchase money, a 39.39 acre tract in oxford and Knowlton Twps., Warren Co.,

<sup>\*</sup> The Rev. Lewis David von Sohweinitz, great grandson of Count Zinzendorf (who organized the United Brethren), b. 1780 and d. 1834 at Bethlehem, Pase, famous botanist. See Dictionary of American Biography.

<sup>(</sup>a) Mark W. Davis, b. 4 March 1804, d. 16 July 1850 aged 45 per gravestone in cemetery north of this house, on road to Blairstown, (son of Aaron Davis 1775-1839, who owned and occupied the Israel Swayze house (NJ-706) south of Hope village, Warren Co.) removed 1837 to Randolph Twp., Morris Co., and 1839 to Harrison, Hudson Co., in cattle business and hotel-keeping there, married 9 Feb. 1826 Ann Reed and had son Hiram W., 1829-1876, of Harrison who had son William Jerome Davis b. 9 Nov. 1858 there, grad. Yale College, admitted N.J. Bar 1884, who purchased the house, here surveyed, in 1923. (F.B. Lee Genealogical and Memorial History of State of N.J., vol. TV, p. 1489, J.P. Snell, Hist. of Sussex & Warren Cos. page 652.)

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beg. at stone, corner to lands of Asa E. Howell, thence along his line and Isaac Albertson's line S 48 E 16.08 chains to corner of lands of said Smyth, S 25 3/4 W 3.43, S 14-3/4 W 4.65, S 38½ W 10.16, N 54 W 13.69 to corner of other lands owned by said Davis, and by same N 25 E 26.84. (Recited in deed of 22 April 1837, Geo. W. Smyth, sole heir of A. Smyth deod., to Mark W. Davis of Randolph Twp., Morris Co., recorded in Warren Deed Bk. No. 15., p. 412.) This lot adjoins the east line of lot No. 2 in Item No. 9, east side of Beaver Creek.

- (12) Deed dated 28 March 1836, Mark W. Davis and wife Ann, of Knowlton Twp., Warren Co., to George W. Cook of Hardwick Twp., same county, conveys for \$5038, a tract of 142.84 acres, in Knowlton Twp., reciting it as assembled of the 3 lots conveyed as in item No. 11. (Warren Co. Deed Bk. No. 14, page 308.)
- (13) Deed dated 1st April 1839, George W. Cook and wife Elizabeth B., of Knowlton Twp., Warren Co., to Asa E. Howell of same place, conveying for \$5988 the abovesaid traot as 141.62 acres and reciting the deed of same from Davis, supra. (Warren Co. Deed Bk. No. 17, page 569.)
- (14) Deed dated 23 March 1868, James K. Swayze, administrator, C. T.A. of the estate of Asa E. Howell late of Warren Co. deod., to Isaiah G. Treat of Hope Twp., same county, conveying for \$7500 the 111.84 acre residue of the 142 acre farm which said Howell purchased from George W. Cook as above. Recites will of said Howell devising to wife Elsa the lifetime use of the farm whereon Eden S. Howell now resides, purchased of G.W. Cook, and after her death to be offered to Grant Treat at \$7500, to contain about 137 acres after the upper 15 acres are set off to testator's homestead farm. (Warren Co. Deed Bk. No. 72 page 162.)
- (15) Deed dated 1st April 1868, Isaiah G. Treat and wife Sarah E. of Hope Twp., Warren Co., to Isaac J. Decker of same place, conveying for \$9320, the abovesaid 111.84 acre farm and a 10 acre woodlot, reciting the deed abstracted in item 14. (Warren Co. Deed Bk. No. 70, page 612.)

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- (16) Deed dated 27 March 1878, Isaac J. Decker and wife Mary, of Hope Twp., Warren Co., to James A. Swayze and Aurelius J. Swayze of same place, conveying for \$7000 the same 111.84 acre and 10 acre lots, reciting the deed above-said. (Warren Co. Deed Bk. No. 104 page 98.)
- (17) Deed dated 25 March 1882, Aurelius J. Swayze and wife Joe A. of Hope Twp., Warren Co., to Henry Aten of Same place, conveying for \$6000 the two tracts "Known es the Decker Farm," 111.84 acres and 10 acres woodlot, reciting the deed abovesaid. (Warren Co. Deed Ek. No. 117, page 411.)
- (18) Deed dated 28 August 1914, Henry F. Aten of Hope Twp., Warren Co., to Luella Aten Eilenberger of same place, quitclaiming a tract of 160.56 acres in said township, reciting the deed last abovesaid and the will of Henry Aten devising to his daughter the said Luella A. Eilenberger the A.J. Swayze Farm, "the stone house farm", will proved 12 March 1913, (Warren C. Deed Bk. No. 202 page 264.)
- (19) Deed dated 26 October 1923, Luella Aten Eilenberger and husband, R.J. Eilenberger, of boro. of Butler, Morris Co., N.J., to Charles R. Cook of city of Rahway, N.J., conveying the 160.56 acre farm in Hope Twp., Warren Co., reciting the deed in item 17 and the will of Henry Aten last abovesaid. (Warren Co. Deed Bk. No. 231 page 92.)
- (20) Deed dated 9 December 1923, Charles R. Cook and wife Louise, of Rahway, N.J., to William J. Davis of the town of Harrison, Hudson County, N.J., conveying the 160,56 acre farm in Hope Twp., Warren Co., reciting the deed in item 17 and the will in 18. (Warren Co. Deed Bk. No. 233, p. 167.)
- (21) From William J. Davis who died 1935, the farm passed by will to his sister Annie E. Blake and her daughter, Miss Louise Blake of Schooley's Mountain, Morris County, New Jersey, who remain as owners at the date of this writing.

References:- Search of title in land and probate records of Warren County, Sussex County, and the Secretary of West New Jersey by the undersigned.

Approved

Leuro D. Cook
Supervising Historian
20 April 1942

Seymour Williams District Officer